



*Georgia Structural Pest Control Commission
19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive
Atlanta, Georgia 30334*

To: Dr. Keith Delaplane

Date: February 6, 2015

From: Georgia Structural Pest Control Commission

Re: Georgia state pollinator protection plan

The Georgia Structural Pest Control Commission (SPCC) serves the public and the professional pest management industry by promulgation of appropriate Rules for the Georgia Structural Pest Control Act, advising the Georgia Department of Agriculture on enforcement issues and ensuring the proper licensing of pest management companies, certification of operators and registration of employees. Central to the SPCC's many activities is the protection of the health and welfare of Georgia including protection from the misuse of pesticides. To that end, the SPCC fully supports UGA's decision to draft a state plan and make recommendations for improving pollinator health.

The SPCC appreciates the opportunity to submit the following comments as recommendations to consider including in the draft state plan.

URBAN CONSIDERATIONS

Home gardens, ornamental landscape plantings, native plants and wildlife all benefit from pollinators. Bees of all species are valuable natural assets, and their pollinating activities are worth the effort to protect and preserve.

Here are some ways for property owners to help pollinators:

- The flight and nesting behavior of certain solitary bees happens in bursts of extreme activity. In spring or summer you might see bees - by the hundreds - flying over a patch of your lawn. This activity is caused by the individual activity of many solitary bees - not a big nest of social insects. Close examination will show the ground pocked with scores or hundreds of tunnels. Solitary bees are gentle, and their sting risk is extremely low! Consider tolerating them and enjoying the spectacle of nature while contributing to a healthy pollinator population because after a few days that burst of activity will die down for another 12 months.
- Know the beekeepers in your neighborhood. Attempt to work with them if you believe there are too many bees in your yard. Remain calm when bees (or bee-like insects) fly near you. Remember that your neighborhood beekeeper is not only a source of local honey but free pollination for your garden.
- Identify the insect that you wish to control in your garden or landscape. If you decide to use a pesticide make any applications to plants during cool mornings (less than 50° F) or after sunset, times when bees are less likely to be foraging. If you must use an insecticide, delay application until after the plant is finished blooming or after removing the flowers.

- Avoid use of systemic insecticides applied to the soil around the base of flowers, trees or shrubs that bloom and attract bees. Systemic insecticides are moved from the soil by plant roots and can eventually be incorporated into nectar and harm bees.
- Mow your grass immediately before applying an insecticide to your turf for pest control. The mowing should get rid of any weed flowers that may attract bees.
- If you have any questions about pollinator protection please contact your local county extension office, the Georgia Department of Agriculture or a pest management professional to develop a practical and effective pest management action plan that considers pollinators.

Here are some tips for the Urban Pest Managers to help pollinators: (based on the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) best management practices.)

- Always read the pesticide label with special attention to the pollinator protection section. Familiarize yourself with the pollinator-attractive plants that are common around structures in your area and determine when those plants are in bloom. Do not make insecticide applications to the flowers or foliage of blooming plants, even weeds. Careful application to non-flowering parts (trunk, stems, roots) of a plant, if the label allows, may be permissible.
- Check the registry of beehive locations by contacting the Georgia Beekeeper Association or other local bee programs and locate beehives in areas where you make pesticide applications. If managed hives are on the property, or adjacent to the property, communicate with the hive owner in order to best protect the beehives.
- In planning or making a pesticide treatment be aware of environmental conditions before, during, and after to keep insecticides where you intend to apply them. Account for wind conditions to prevent insecticides from drifting onto flowers and use low pressure and a coarse spray application to minimize pesticide drift.
- Feral bee colonies or bee swarms in or around structures can pose a threat to human health or property. When reasonable, it is recommended that any honeybee colony or swarm identified as a threat is properly removed and/or relocated. Keep an updated list of locally available bee removal experts to assist in that process. However, a pesticide application may be necessary after consideration of all other options and these instances should be handled by a registered/certified pest management professional with experience in this area of pest management.

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